

GORGEIOUS POETRY

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GORGEIOUS POETRY

GORGEIOUS POETRY 1911-1920

FIRST SERIES.

PHILIP ALLAN & CO:
QUALITY COURT, CHANCERY LANE,
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DEDICATED
TO
DOROTHY.

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INTRODUCTION.

“ We live,” said the wise and observant man, “ in an age of excessive speed.”

A terrible truth shone through his words. For even our writers, many of them, are sick of a fever; a fever caught easily from machinery and other short cuts to material prosperity. The picture-show is a symptom; the revue is a symptom; modern sensational journalism, “ freak ” sculpture, cubism, vorticism, futurism, dadaism, formless verse; they are all symptoms. Little cliques of writers spring up like rank weeds in a swamp. Strange parasitic growths gather round them.

Thinking these things, I wrote, gaily and quickly, this little book of absurdities. Some of them are at least as funny as the more serious work of our English cliques. You will, if you read the works of the ultra-modern poets, catch their characteristics: love of sudden bathos, startling epithets, meaningless phrases, mad similes, a fear of being sincere for too long, an affected cynicism.

But this book is not an attack. The sane work of sane poets is the only attack that can annihilate the upstarts who try to crowd into that cool hall on Olympus by a tradesman's entrance that does not exist. I hate their work, not because they write of ugly things, but because they write so badly.

But let us join them for a space. Let us tear ourselves away from the worn-out rhythms, and the hackneyed themes. Let us sing of bicycles and barrel-organs, of stomachs and orange-peel, of cisterns, headwaiters, and American teeth. Let us praise, as true men should, the student of nature who laboured to make "Sordello" the libretto for his opera. (He had a brother who wrote a symphony called "Take it Away and Bring me Mutton Instead.")

From the merely bizarre to the strange is as far a flight as from Fancy to Imagination. We will not mistake stupid grimaces for mediæval gargoyles. Nor will we quite forget, while the frenzy is over us, that honest foolery is worth its weight in fairy gold.

Who are they whom we are joining? A great company they are, and loud-voiced. They say, for the most part, nothing, but they say it repeatedly. They roar it. They eat their way into periodicals, like strange insects.

They salute each other in the market-place. Some, no doubt, have their tongues in their cheeks. But most of them are sad with seriousness, and move in a gloom, unhappy and misunderstood. Others, more fortunate, are acclaimed.

It is all a great stir, and amusing, so long as it does no great harm. But "Oblong Voices," and "Murdered Ships" are a danger to a large newly educated public. "The Green Face Under the Knocker" is almost a crime.

I mention no names. Not for all the wealth of the woods in autumn will I advertize one of them.

And that (as those say who reason lucidly) is that.

J. B. M.

Aug. 1920.

TWO VOICES.

O, we will go the ancient ways—
All that sort of thing's stone dead—
And sing the half forgotten days—
We've got stuff of our own instead.

Flute, harp, and lyre are overpast—
Weak sort of instruments at the best—
Shall they be shattered at the last?
Naturally; they wouldn't stand any real test.

Men bring a newer instrument,
And tune it to a newer song—
It's rather like those things the Jazz niggers
play,
Guaranteed to bring a poor devil of an author
more pay.

And yet . . and yet . . it almost seems—
Don't start that, you fool; this is the goods—
This music cannot match our dreams—
Come on, now! Let her go! . . .
Bump!
Tong!

CHANT ROYAL.

Come on !

Let's remake the whole damned universe.

Our splendid dreams

Shall be peacocks and peahens.

They shall mate in the turgidity

Of earth's quagmire,

And bear offspring in holy ecstasy.

We'll have poppy-coloured thoughts

To match our internal harmonies.

Our intrepid souls

Shall voyage in eternity,

Disturbing the slumbers of those mages

The stars,

Who nod their golden beards in boredom.

We won't wear bowlers or spats,

But will go in pride

With untrammelled bodies.

We'll be iconoclasts, argonauts, juggernauts.

We'll not eat roast beef o' Sundays,

Or be smug or snug.

No more stale conventions and phrases ;

Our minds our mints.

We are masters of the mints ;

We'll coin new speech and new theories.

Let the music swell.

Come on !

Down with everyone except us—

(This is so easy. It's a shame

To take the money).

MORNING SONG.

Tap ! Tap !

Yes, Annie?

Seven o'clock, mum.

Enough !

Another day.

Plump. Plump.

Cold oil-cloth.

Blow ! where's the sponge?

Chattering of teeth.

Can't find my sponge.

Where is it?

(Too short to print so far).

Where ever is it?

(Short lines fill columns).

Where can it be?

I wonder.

Enough !

Life's little troubles.

And there . . there . . outside,

While I look for a sponge,

Is the great golden sun,

And the wide world,

And dreams and adventures !

DEATH'S IRONY.

Babies have such little toes,
So soft and pink and small;
“ Four by six,” said the master-plumber,
And I worked at my wall.

Babies have such innocent ways,
So quiet and nice and sweet;
“ Get that pipe laid down there, 'Arry.”
I work that they may eat.

Babies and I will be dust one day,
What's the good of it all?
“ One yard out,” said the master-plumber,
Leaning against the wall.

.
“ He's stone dead,” said the master-plumber,
And they carried me away,
Killed by a falling nine-inch brick-hod . . .
“ Bless Dad,” my babies say.

THE NEW AGE.

Hoot, hoot, the motor-car
Scatters all the horse-hair,
Mutton-chop whiskers,
Sundays at church;
Make way Tennyson,
By your leave, Browning,
Even you, Swinburne—
Left in the lurch.

All back numbers now,
Knocked all end-ways,
Cobwebby trance-folk,
You've had your time.
Motors and machinery,
Radium and gramophones,
Pelman, Pianolas,
And just one rhyme.

No more simpering,
No more modesty,
No more high necks,
Truths free at last.
Emancipated women,
Jazz-mad children,
Welcome Mr. Present,
Grrr ! Mr. Past !

THE MUSIC-HALL.

Tights, lights, cat-calls;

Orange, green, gold, purple;

Dust, cigar-smoke.

(" Guess I'll beat it for that one horse town ").

They're not real—only Tecla . . .

7/6 a yard, my dear . . .

Couldn't book a room . . .

Chock-a-block . . .

Under the clock at 8-45 . . .

(" Baby dear, I wanna hug yer ").

Wotto, Alf! . . .

Scarlet stockings . . .

Gin and Italian . . . Bloody dull . . .

Not 'arf . . .

Let go . . . Not as good as the last . . .

Our sailor King . . . stand up . . .

Like army days . . .

Home, Rupert . . .

ASPIRATION.

I have harnessed my soul to the comets,
I have flung my dreams in handfuls
Among the planets.
They glitter like ice-packs in undiscovered
Arctic regions.

I have dug for hidden gold in your mind.
I'll be your rain and sleet,
Your snow and sunshine.

I'll move the Himalayas,
I'll burn the world with my marvellous ideas.

All for you.

I'll scatter my conquests at your feet
Like so much dirt.

You shall have Hell for your boudoir fire;
Heaven for your asking,
Is yours.

You shall play marbles with high hills,
And bathe your hands in oceans.

But when I come to you
I'll be as soft and gentle and fatuous
As a backboneless young ass
Who makes copy out of his feverish self-
analysis.

THE SOUL'S QUESTIONING.

Fast are the dim woods folded into silence,
Light leaves the hills, and the black woods
are dumb,
Out rush the stars adown th' untrammelled
sky,
A lonely woodpecker calls and calls
"Come!"

A little hour and man's most fitful fever
Is but a gossip for the spiring worms,
Death will take toll most certainly, most
surely,
Whether by battle, sudden death, or germs.

The vaulty silence laps old earth around;
Great nature's heart, in husht expectancy,
Awaits the revelations of the seer
As a sailor in quarantine awaits the sea.

No. No. If hard endeavour gain no solace,
If febrile urgings soften not at all,
Then were life hyssop, vinegar and aloes,
Sorrel and woodbine, brimstone, phlox and
gall.

FALLEN WOMEN.

Forlorn they go
Under garish lamplight,
Thin wraiths of desire,
Passion's shuttlecocks.
Their indigo eyelashes
Lie on their white faces
Like soot on Swiss cheese.
Their glittering eyes glimmer
And glare,
Like Roman candles
In a foul place.
Their words are poisonous honey,
Which we, poor bees,
Pilfer.
Their lips are Scylla and Charybdis,
Their tongues the angry sea
Between.

Dawn shines down on tumbled beds
And dishevelled wigs.

Dark furrows are under their eyes,
Passion's plough has seared them.

Their boots are buried under
French novels.

Outside a milkman cries, tentatively,
Milk-Coooo.

O Sin!

OLD SONG REJUVENATED.

Bah, Bah.

Repeatedly, untiringly,

One asks oneself

Whether it be possible or no

That the black sheep

Has any wool.

Clean, defiant, confident,

Rings down the ears

The answer.

The black sheep

Has wool,

To the extent of three

Bags.

LOVE.

Lean down; lean down that I may see
Thine uttermost infinity,
And sense within my slumbrous mind
Magic that I one day may find.

Lean down again that I may guess
The joyous pain of thy distress,
Aye, light my spirit's darkling skies
With th' empyrean of star-spangled eyes.

Lean down a third time, closer still,
That love may work his flowery will,
Met to mine aching spirit balm,
Then we'll be happy on the farm.

MARRIED LIFE.

“ Eat your gristle, Florrie,
Naughty little thing.”

Why ever did I marry,
I wonder.

“ Fold your napkin neatly,
Clumsy little girl.”
Once I thought that love was
Romantic.

“ Say your grace now, darling;
Not too fast. That’s right.”
Of course, the trouble is that
No court would ever give a chap
A divorce for this sort of thing.

INCOMPATIBILITY.

I think you hold the secrets
Of the hills,
And of the long shadows
Among the trees,
And of the beechen silences.

I think you could reveal to me
Why dawn and the stars
Are a beauty.

You are something
That sings in all music,
Throbs in the waves,
Mourns in Autumn boughs,
Where the elfin horns
Have a music of decay.

You are just beyond all horizons,
Gray, unintelligible,
Wonderful as a flame,
Pure as an altar-candle,
Beautiful as lost love,
Or buried hope.
But, honey-mouth,
Must you wear cotton stockings?

SELLING TREACLE.

All day long I stand here,
A poor old woman,
Selling treacle—
(Damn the flies).

.
All day long I stand
In a cul-de-sac;
I've got epilepsy,
And apoplexy,
And gout.
I'm all alone in the world.
My old man
Died of gin in '97.
He was a one for the glass,
He was.

Once I was young and beautiful;
These withered limbs
Were maddeningly lovely.
Men loved me.
There was Bob . . .
And Martin . . .
And Ern . . .
God! How fair I was.
Now I'm old,
And can't make ends meet—
(Damn the flies).

I remember old pubs and old kisses,
The beer on the floor,
The wail of a violin in the doorway,
And old man Hicks
Shouting "Time."
I remember Youth,
And the straw hat Tom gave me,
And Kew Gardens,
And bands playing
"Hug me
Quickly."

Oh, well;
I'm a hag now,
A silly old faggot.
All day long I stand
In this ruddy cul-
de-sac,
Selling—
(Damn the flies)—
Treacle.

REACTIONAL.

Night drops tristfully
Over the nasturtia
In Manlius Silico's garden.
The moon, wandering about
En déshabille,
Fawns on th' adulterous stars.
Come, Manumbra,
Come, I will explain to you
The abstruse technicalities
Of the Greek and Roman systems
Of Colonization.
Quien Sabe? Those Spaniards
Were gay chaps—
A little impalpable, but, there!
I think they do this stuff much better
In France.
Damn!
I think it's time we fetched our bicycles
From the shed.
I'll translate Propertius to you as we go.

NOCTURNE.

Two policemen
On point duty
In the
Pentonville Road
Heard a rumpus.

“ What’s that? ”

Said George.

“ Dunno,” said
Herbert.

“ Probably a noise
Of sorts.”

“ Wat kind of sorts? ”
Asked George.

Silence broods
Like a prophetess
Over the
Pentonville Road.

Suddenly a wail as of
A wounded
Thing.

Bloody Joe,
With the thin end
Of a wedge,
Has killed his wife
Again.

WAR.

Flash, crump, crater, and bang,
Blood, guts, bodies, and brains,
That's the way we do it,
For he's a jolly good fellow.

At home they smoke coronas,
And applaud leering girls . . .
And ogle twice a night . . .
God! If I had a four-point-five!

Flash, crump, flick, and whirr,
General's singing—"Give 'em Hell!"
Bill's dead and Joe's dead
Dick's gone west, and Alf's gone mad,
General's wife's eating quail at the Ritz
With a neutral Count.

THE SORROW OF INCOMPETENCE

My sorrow that I,
With the tear-glimmering sword
Of Ængus in my heart,
Am dumb as the children
Of raven-haunted Lir.

My sorrow that I,
With the ever-singing birds
Of yellow-haired Ængus
About my path,
Cannot do this sort of thing
Like Yeats.

FLOCKS.

Flocks of thoughts
Scramble over
The cornices
Of my mountainous mind.

Flocks of days
Turn my blood
To water and milk,
When I think of Infinity.

Flocks, flocks, flocks
At the foot of my bed I see,
But the undying ego
Knows nothing of all this.

AFTER HO-HO. (2ND CENTURY.)

Little Wi-Pung,
Playing at ball,
Tripped on an oyper
And spoilt the game.

Jinika Sutras
Heard it and ran,
“ Up, little Wi-Pung,
Up, little harushiki.”

Alas, little Wi-Pung
Lay without sound;
No more for ever
Will his voice be heard.

Jinika Sutras
Wears deep mourning,
But that won't bring little
Wi-Pung back.

WORLD-SORROW.

(After Reading Goethe).

Shelley loved a girl—many girls—,
And he was drowned.

Dante fell in love, and never touched the girl.
He's dead.

Anne Hathaway is probably
Trodden into the boards of
A Tilling motor-'bus.

Helen's out like a candle.

Asps laugh at Cleopatra
To this day.

Romeo lives occasionally for a few nights
At a theatre.

Ye Gods!

All these people loved—even the man
Who plays Romeo, probably—

Why on earth should I love you?

INDIAN DEATH.

The grass shines like golden feathers. In the sky ruffled clouds pass like birds in a dream. The water drones over the little foot-bridge. The garden is silent. From the house come the strains of a Zapanah. A man is playing a very old tune. It is the tune that the sacred bull died of. The voices of the trees are hushed. The chill night-wind holds its breath. A pebble falls from the roof and rolls across the verandah. In the house little Misha is dying. His little head is on his pillow. His body is flat. His face looks up at the ceiling. His sunny curls are spread about his little face like a halo. He sighs. The night-wind carries his little sigh to the plains. He sighs again, but the night-wind is, this time, not having any. A woman brings medicine in a jemadar.

Ah, life! Little Misha is dead.

THE TWO WORLDS.

Swallow, jay and rook,
All nature is my friend,
I know quaint places,
Rococo woods,
Bizarre valleys,
Dells and wealds.

Daffodil, hollyhock, ranunculus,
I know them all,
Hibiscus, buttercup, sorrel,
Aconite and milkwort.

And yet I have to
Wear spats
When I go to see
Mrs. Vellum-Wace.

A BALLAD OF DEAD POETS.

At the turnstile of night
Peter takes the tickets,
And the ochre stars
Are his peaceful pickets.

Peter punches them clean,
And hands them round
To the poets who wait
With never a sound.

At the turnstile of night
They take fares, you see,
For their long journey
To immortality.

Bad poets or good,
Peter don't care,
It's all one to him
On his lacquered chair.

OUTRE-MONDE.

She walked in her garden,
Thinking blue thoughts,
And Chicago answered her,
Flumsh !

She walked in her scullery,
Thinking sloppy thoughts,
And Chicago answered her,
Flumsh !

She lay in her bed,
Thinking purple things,
And Chicago answered her,
Flumsh !

To all questions and questioners,
At all times,
In all places,
Chicago has one answer ;
Flumsh !

DOUBT.

You are my Sphinx,
My pre-dynastic riddle,
My spirit's conundrum.

You are my moon,
My tidal ebb and flow,
My dog-star, my climacteric.

You are my other I,
Ineffable, virginal,
My cosmic completion.

And yet I sometimes think,
When the Monaco goes
Round and round,
And my tongue's like sawdust,
That I may be
Pulling
Your leg.

AT THE CONCERT.

Sensuous wailing of violins,
Throbbing pulsations,
Naked symphonic ecstacies,
Flesh-coloured chords,
Quivering diapasons,
Gamut after gamut,
Harmonies that tear the soul,
Tremulous counterpoint.

Bare shoulders and backs,
Glittering necks,
Ospreys and birds of paradise,
Parisian scent,
Plush seats.

And in Smolensk
The Bolshev'ik moon
Blinks down on
Shrivelled, slit throats.

THE JOURNEYMAN AND THE MAID.

“ Tell me, pretty journeyman,
What hast there? ”

“ Oranges and roses
For a Spanish girl’s hair.”

“ Tell me, naughty journeyman,
Tell me true,
What is a little maid,
A pretty maid, to do? ”

“ Ah,” said the journeyman,
“ You have me there . . .

“ Oranges and roses
For a Spanish girl’s hair.”

“ That’s life,” said the journeyman,
“ Life stripped bare,
And the more you can,
The less you dare.”

ENNUI.

January, February, March, April,
May, June, July, August . . .
What a dull life
For little Sidney.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,
Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday,
Tuesday . . . Nothing but days,
And weeks and months and years.
That's life, little Sidney.

GLOTTA.

Glotta, the hangman's daughter,
Hard by the castle wall,
Presses the grapes for the feast-day;
She wears a check shawl.

Her almond eyes are dancing
Like snowflakes in the sun,
She will be waiting for me
When her work's done.

I shall steal close to Glotta,
And whisper silver words,
And in her voice there'll answer
All Spring's birds.

Glotta, the hangman's daughter,
A rarest gem is she,
And when she's quite done treading on grape-
skins,
She'll be ready for me.

JADE'S LOVE.

I love William Braddel Hyam;
He takes me to tea
At the Astoria,
And gives me cakes.

I also love Ulyate;
He gives me kisses
At my flat.

Why can't I find someone
Rich enough and loving enough
To combine cakes
With kisses?

What a little jade I am.
I don't care.
Yes, I do.
No, I don't.

MOOD ALTERNATION.

When you play, I think
I'll be a better man,
I'll give up drink
If I can.

When you play, I know
My sins will find me out,
They raise scarlet heads
And they shout.

When you play, Carissima,
I'm broken with remorse;
I go from you feeling
Like a cathedral full of devils.

Sentimental eyewash!
When once I've left you
I don't care a fig
If it snows.

LARGHETTO.

I saw you for a moment—no more—
Under the lamp,
At Hoxton, dark Jewess;
On a Tuesday in March,
You passed.

The swish and swirl of your dress
Has echoed along the corridors
Of my mind
For eight years,
Till all my thoughts
Hiss like silk underwear.

How triste.

BLOOMSBURY.

As embers grow to a blaze
Under the breath of bellows,
So the sky glowed redder
As the wind blew
Out of the gates of Russell Square.
Near the dim railings
A skinny woman
Offered Swedish matches
At a penny a box.
“ What’s the good of the sunset? ”
Said she.

Come now, philosopher,
Beetle-browed,
Tell us,
What is the good of the sunset?

A QUERY.

Ganger George
Hit his mate,
Because he put in
His appearance late;
That's what started
The General Strike,
Now they're all
Doing a mike.

Meanwhile George,
In Downing Street,
Wears patent leather
On his feet . . .
And Bacon said
“ What's in a name? ”
What does it mean?
Who's to blame?

SOUVENIR D'ANTAN, OR THE
SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD.

Do you still live in Zenka,
That little lowland town,
Wearing that temperament of yours
Like a flowered gown?

Do you still read George Moore
And Brantôme,
And pare your nails
With an orange-stick
From Douglas in Bond Street?

Do you still eat raw haddock
When cook's out courting a boatman,
And clean your cigarette holder
With eau-de-cologne,
And play Chopin by candle-light,
And collect china and glass?

Do you still say amazing things
To cynical young men?

Do you ever think of Saxmundham
And the lime-trees,

And my impossible romanticism?
But do you? \. . .

I wonder if you're the same?
I'm not. I've got three children.
I'm forgetting you—
But if you came back . . .

LOW-I'-THE-MOULD.

Little Anne's dead !

(Hair that was gold).

Gay games we played with her,

Jokes we ha' made with her,

All hearts are laid with her

Low-i'-the-Mould.

Little Anne's gone,

Thirteen years old.

No more we'll sing to her,

Dolls and sweets bring to her ;

All hearts take wing to her

Low-i'-the-Mould ;

Ah, but we'll cling to her

Low-i'-the-Mould

Low-i'-the-Mould.

Anne must be cold,

Grimy and slimy,

Damp, wet, and cold,

(Ah, head of gold).

Home to the fold !

All hearts will rest with her,

Sleep with her, nest with her
Low-i'-the-Mould.

Low-i'-the-
Low-i'-the-
Low-i'-the-Mould.

THE CLOSE OF LIFE.

Rose o' the vale, the years are over us,
Your lips are withered, and mine are
chapped,
John, the grave-digger's waiting to cover us,
He's got our graves all neatly mapped.

Do you remember, Rose of the roses,
One wild gloaming in the fall of the year,
Such moments come to all, one supposes,
Come, and are gone, with a smile and a tear.

Rose of my spirit, life has been splendid,
Splendid and splendid and perfectly fine,
And now it's done with, and now it's ended,
Pass the Kaola for old lang syne.

OLD MEN.

Old men in Camelot
Heard as a story,
Tristram's treachery
Galahad's glory;
"By the rood," the old men said,
"The times are strange,
"Arthur's kingdom crumbles
"There'll be a change."

Old men in Fenchurch Street
Heard as a story,
Smith & Co's treachery
Smythe & Co's glory;
"By God!" the old men said,
"Things aren't what they used to be,
"There'll be a change."

DEE DIDDLE UM DUM DEE.

(For music).

The Isle of Wight's a bonny isle,
Set in a bonny sea,
And all the girls are bonny there,
Dee diddle um dum dee.

There are broken hearts in the Isle of Wight,
And one is broken for me,
For I'm the girl with the naughty eyes,
Dee diddle um dum dee.

But fare the world and speed the day,
And let what will be, be,
For he who breaks must surely pay,

(Slower)

Dee diddle um dum dee.

ETHEL.

Night casts a silence over Brixton Hill,
And the last gutter-snipes are safe a-bed.
I, only I, by dreams made eremite,
Wander the streets, nor see the laughing throng
Crowding the gateways of the picture-house,
Where "Fourteen Sins" is shown. The

Brixton dusk

Deepens to indigo, the wild winds flute
Old pagan melodies around the shops;
And Axten's Corner battlemented stands
Like some lost Viking fronting the last 'bus,
That rolls from Kennington to Thornton
Heath.

Why do I wander? Ask my shrinking heart
That frets and fumes and faints this many
nights!

Why do I wander? Ask my drooping soul,
That is the willow of the weary world.

Why do I wander? Ask my wretched pen
That wades in Stephens' Ink, and will not
cease.

But seriously. I wander Brixton Hill

Because fair Ethel lives in Butting Road,
And droops her eye, if I but murmur "Eth."
So night and I are sleepless. We sleep not,
And Ethel, recking nought, snores like an ox.
I wander . . .

SEOGH-NA-NSAIGH.

(Far from the Gælic).

Bitter black bog-water
In the Lake of the Twelve Swords,
And one standing
Like a flaming bird
At the threshold of light.

Yet the shanachies,
Shriven of Balor of the Evil Eye,
Twitter like thrushes
In the soul's eaves.

Ah, Shublach,
Aroon, asthore,
A new dawn comes
For Innisfail,
And the daughter of Houlihan
Hears the rune—
“ When the rood blossoms,
The four fields laugh.”

What things do be happening
When the liver's out of order.

(From the Book of the Bally Bunnion.)

OLD PROVENÇAL MELODY.

Down in Provence where the troubadours grow,
(La la larilon).

That's the place for a poet to go,
(Lirilon, larilon, la).

For everyone knows at a cursory glance,
The slightest thing looks like romance,
Especially if you mention France,
(Larilon li latouche).

When Philip the Fair (or someone) was King,
(La la larilon).

Life was easy if you could sing
(Lirilon, larilon, la).

And a man didn't face starvation then,
Or sell his soul to drive his pen,
Or mix with the common herd of men,
(Larilon li latouche).

Your bed and your victuals were always sure,
(La la larilon).

Life was a jolly old sinecure,
(Lirilon, larilon, la).

And that is the age that it pays to praise,
The real old, good old, fine old days,—
And you never know what'll start a craze
(Larilon li latouche).

NOVEMBER.

The blackbird's gay November song
And the primroses scattered far
Fill all the sky with lutes and bells
From star to frosty star.

Beside the pond the pipit cries,
The heather's all abloom,
The winter sun among the sedge
Weaves and unweaves its loom.

The rattle-snake has laid its eggs,
The cuckoo in the dew,
Fights with the stonechat for a worm,
The sky is very blue.

The hollyhocks and arabis
Give out their heavy scent,
And raise their purple heads aloft
Till all their sweets are spent.

The sun that rose from out the East,
Is sinking in the West,
Night will be dark, unless the moon
Comes from its harvest nest.

*Note.—There could be more, but nothing
would happen.*

LINES WRITTEN ON FIRST SEEING
LOUIS JACOMB'S PICTURE:
" THE DYING TICKET-COLLECTOR."

There he lies by the platform,
His ticket-puncher in his cold hand.
His face is triangular, his legs
Are like steel pistons. His eyes
Stand out in relief. His body is
All cut up into cubes and circles and angles.
His nostrils are purple, and his boots
Go into points. His hand is like
The iron hand of a Martian.
None of this is his fault. It's how
The artist saw him, and caught
In a flash the quintessential meaning
Of his being.

AFTERMATH.

My publisher rang me up and said he
Wanted another poem to finish
Up this book.
I went round to see him and we took
Out our pipes and discussed it.
I favoured a lyric, a tender, moving affair
About a girl with onyx eyes.
He suggested an epode to a militiaman.
So we split the difference, and I wrote this:
And honestly, you know, it's B—— G—— to
the life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.



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